



CHN SERIES: AID TO PRAYER AND REFLECTION

April 2017: Awareness

Sister Pamela, CHN



Do we miss the beauty of our surroundings because we are so used to them and take them for granted? We go around so immersed in ourselves we do not see either the beauty or the need around us. We do not listen and miss God's call to us in silence, in others, in what is around us. In our busy world the computer, I-pad or TV can become more important than picking up in a conversation the needs of another or the depth of beauty in all God's creation. We miss the sign that God wants us to listen, to look, to see these things. Maybe, we only realise this when we look back on our day or week, the despair of another, or again maybe we do not even realise these things at all.



Community House at night, by Sister Avrill



Rock Wallaby, Flinders Ranges, by Talexbikes,

When coming home from Wangaratta one day, a priest was driving me and we stopped in a wonderful bush clearing for lunch. To my joy a Rock Wallaby was standing still in front of a rock and I hushed the priest and said we would sit at the first table so we would not disturb it. A short time

later realising we would not hurt it the wallaby started feeding and eventually hopped up the rocks. To this day, the priest has not seen it; its camouflage was so good!

Growing up with Aboriginal people in Northern NSW, I learnt to detect and watch small animals in the bush, to tell where a rip was at Yamba beach, to see a shoal of fish in the Clarence River and to watch the sky to tell what the weather will be doing. Even in scripture Jesus teaches that when we see a red sky at night we say it will be a hot day tomorrow, and if it is red in the morning, it will be stormy today. If we can tell from the sky what is happening why do we not know what is happening among us today? (My own wording of Matthew 16:1-3.). But it is so true, we can tell some signs around us, but important ones we can miss altogether.

Consider the instincts of animals.

People have trained dogs to be seeing-eye dogs, giving more freedom to the blind. Dogs can now detect, drugs, bombs, cancer and even tell someone to take their epilepsy medicine prior to a seizure.



A blind person learns to use a guide dog at the test track of the Brailleliga, Belgium



Not long after the big earthquake in Newcastle in 1989, one of the scientists at Newcastle University wrote a small piece in the local paper. Prior to the earthquake, pet owners were disciplining their animals for the commotion they were making. Some of the scientists were amazed at the amount of birds flying in flocks rather than roosting as they would at that time of day. After the earthquake they realised that, with all our scientific instruments, etc., it was the animals who actually warned us that the earthquake was coming and we did not notice. They could tell all of the prior warnings that we as “brilliant human scientists” could not detect with all our instruments. Some years later the same scientist wrote that he was on an island when one of the big tsunamis came and noticed prior to it, that all the animals, even if tethered broke their tethers and headed for the hills, long before the tsunamis hit. We humans might think that we are the bright ones, yet the animals have more instincts than we now have.

In the Book of Mark, we read,

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, ‘Let us go across to the other side.’ And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, ‘Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?’ He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’ Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?’ And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’ (4:35-41)

“Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

“Peace! Be still!”

“Why are you afraid?

Have you still no faith?”



Jesus Stilling the Tempest, by James Tissot, in Brooklyn Museum,

There are times in life when we need to look deeply at things. Do I have faith? Do I believe? Is there a God? If so do I need Him? These are the times, often in a crisis, illness, etc. when we probe, when we listen, when we search and as we search we look deep within (hopefully) to find answers. Mind during this time there are doubts, which can lead to insight or they could be temptations from the devil.

We also have to look at these times during our lives at how aware are we of what is around us. Do I listen to others or only hear what I want to hear when speaking with someone? Did I miss the small call for help or the despair of the other person, because I was so wrapped up in my own world?

The disciples knew only fear of the weather. Jesus pointed out their lack of trust, their unbelief and not a thought of praying to God.

Look at Jesus' life. He began searching for faith as the child in the Temple, asking questions of the learned. After his baptism he went out into the wilderness, to pray, to seek, to be tempted by the devil. When he went into ministry, he often went to pray alone. He foretold his death and resurrection to his apostles. Yet at Gethsemane, in his humanity, he prayed "Father, let this cup pass from me, yet not my will but yours be done." On the cross, he cried "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Yet with his dying breath he cried, "Into your hands I commit my spirit."



*Pyrography of
Jesus praying by
Vasilispavlatos*

The knowledge that God is with me through my trials and tribulations gives me hope and trust. For deep within is this knowledge, even when my words seem to imply something different. Even when at times I get very tired, irritable, lose my temper, I have learned to turn back and rest in God; to put my faith deep within God, as Jesus walks beside me, allowing the Spirit to guide me in my daily life. Faith hope and love go together with doubt, fear and what we often look at as the absence of God in our lives.

'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' of Psalm 22 ends with, 'O praise the Lord, all you that fear him.... he has saved my life for himself...this shall be told to a future generation...that he has done it.'



CHN gardens

Are we open to and aware of what God is showing us? Look around you at others, at nature, yourself, incidents in life. Did you see God in them or did you miss the opportunity?

AWARENESS

What is Awareness, how do I find it?
Look around you and see and observe,
Did you notice that before in the scene ahead
Or is it so familiar you miss the details.
Do you hear what each person is saying, or are you
So wound up in yourself you miss their little cry for
help.



Homeless by Gary Knight

Look at the world and see what the needs are
These are things to pray about or maybe give thanks for relief.
Yet you miss the homeless in the street or church next door
You forget the person who you think is living in their car
The children who are hungry or only have one set of clothes
The family whose provider is addicted to drugs or gambling.



*Jesus sitting in the
midst of the doctors,
by James Tissot*

What is awareness of myself and my needs?
Do I look the other way or put them to the back of my
mind?
Do I pray for guidance in each situation I find myself,
Or walk with Jesus on my Way of the Cross?
Do I seek God's help in good times as well as bad,
In sickness and in health or only when I think I need to?

Jesus looked to God for guidance on his life's pathway
In the Temple as a child, asking questions, listening,
At his baptism, and in the wilderness tempted forty days,
In his days of teaching when he went off by himself to pray.
In Gethsemane when he asked God to take this cup from me
Yet he added but not my will but yours be done.

On the cross he cried, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"
But at the point of death, "Into your hands I commit my spirit."
Can I learn to be aware as Jesus was of God's presence
In every situation, in every step of my path of life,
As I walk the Way of the Cross with Jesus by my side?
Awareness, look and find it where God is showing you today.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

The way of the Cross
Is not just a walk to Calvary
And onto the Resurrection.
It entails the daily walk with God



*Calvary Garden, Community
House, CHN*

Life's joys, sorrows, ups and downs.
The daily round of ordinary life
No sudden flashes of conversion
But just walking each day with God,
As Jesus did on earth.

Seeing in each scene, each person, each work
The Hand of God, and trials of life
That come to each and every one.
And looking back we glimpse at times
That God was there beside us.

And as Jesus walked this earth
He also cried, "My God,
My God why have you forsaken me?"
So, we also must walk and look and learn
That in our darkest hour
God is also there beside us as we walk
Our Way of the Cross.

The content of this booklet is from Sister Pamela, CHN, based on her work for the Prayer Day of April 2017.

It is part of a series of 'Aids to Prayer and Reflection' which have been developed from our monthly Prayer Days, for your personal use. You may pick up other Aids from Community House or simply download copies from our website. We hope our readers find them helpful in their prayer lives.



3. A seed
A time of
and providence
in the "56
shoot

One of the necessities of life is WATER. We probably take it for granted unless there are severe drought conditions. It is so basic—for quenching our thirst, for cooking, for growing the very food we eat and for cleansing and healing, in the society and age in which we live, water is readily available by turning on a tap. However, it was not always so!

Water can also be destructive and terrifying, e.g. torrential rain, floods, storms at sea, tsunamis, etc.

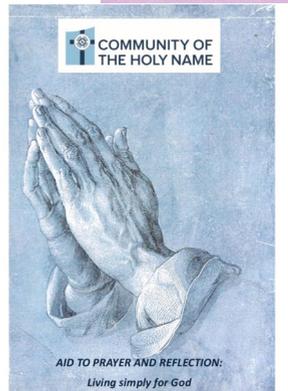


It is little wonder that springs and wells have been an important part of life from the earliest known times. We can read of the veneration of water by pagans and the value it held for the ancient Greeks and Romans, in the City of Bath, the springs were venerated long before the Romans went to Britain. By medieval times, wells in many parts of the country began to be regarded as holy places.

The word "well" comes from the Anglo-Saxon "weald", meaning a spring bubbling up from the ground, not a well as we think of it today as a shaft dug to reach underground water. The majority of wells in the UK were dedicated towards the end of the Middle Ages and some were Christianized from pagan worship, but not all. One of their original purposes may have been for baptisms. The blessing of water used in baptisms goes back to early Christian practice, as writings from the early Christian Fathers record. So, through every century, water has been revered with importance, expressed in a variety of ways.



CHN SERIES: AID TO PRAYER AND REFLECTION
March 2017: Lenten fasting and praying



Associate, CHN



AID TO PRAYER AND REFLECTION:
Renewing our spirits

AID TO PRAYER AND REFLECTION:
Where is God in the darkness?

AID TO PRAYER AND REFLECTION:
Sacred space and breath prayer

You are welcome to join us for Days of Prayer and Reflection, which are held at the Community House, on the first Thursday of the month, from March till November, 10am until 3pm.

The Eucharist is celebrated at midday and there are opportunities to sit quietly, use our library and wander in the gardens. BYO lunch; tea and coffee are provided.

There is no charge but a donation is appreciated.

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